

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

PLANS PROCEED FOR TWO NEW SCHOOLS IN NEW WESTMINSTER

NEW WESTMINSTER – Plans to build two schools in New Westminster will proceed under tight new controls, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced today.

“This marks a fresh start that will eventually see a new middle school and secondary school constructed in New Westminster,” said Bond. “The Province will continue working with the school district and community to ensure students and staff have a safe and healthy place in which to learn and teach.”

The secondary school and middle school were first announced in 2003, but were put on hold because of projected district cost overruns. An independent consultant was asked to review the project and help get it back on track. With that review now complete, the school district is working closely with the Ministry of Education on the project.

“I would like to thank the ministry and the independent review team for working with us to come up with an exciting proposal that will positively affect education in New Westminster,” said Michael Ewen, New Westminster school board chair. “We look forward to continuing this ongoing co-operative and productive relationship in developing these capital projects with the ministry.”

The New Westminster district will use a design-build method for the schools to ensure construction stays on target and is completed as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. The new schools will be built on the existing New Westminster secondary school site, and the first of the two schools is expected to be ready for use in 2009. The new schools will also be built to current seismic standards.

“We’ve said all along that we’re taking a different approach to school construction,” said Bond. “The Chilliwack school district successfully used the design-build method for its new G.W. Graham middle/secondary school, and I’m pleased New Westminster will be using the same approach.”

The construction of the two New Westminster schools supports government’s throne speech commitment to work with boards to better manage capital planning across all school districts.

Since 2001, the Province has spent over \$1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 32 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovation projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than \$2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects.

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